

Times, They Are A-Changing

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In the 1960's, there was a popular song by Bob Dylan, "Times They Are a Changing". This song plays over and over in my mind when I look at the differences that I am able to see from when I was a child growing up in the 1960's and 1970's. I was really too young to be a hippie, but I remember this time quite well. My oldest brother was probably influenced the most by the music and clothing during this period of our country's history, and unfortunately, the drug culture.

Aside from the turbulent headlines during this era, I was oblivious to the Vietnam War, Civil Rights, and Woodstock. As a child growing up in white, suburban America, at the time I felt relatively safe in school and at home. I believe most children did, at least those who we lived by. My father was in the Coast Guard, so whenever possible, we would live on base in military housing. I enjoyed living on base more than I liked living in civilian neighborhoods, I think because the other kids were more like us. They knew well how it felt to be the new kid, and their parents were often cut from the same cloth as my parents.

Living on a military base also introduced me to a more diverse group of friends. Although I remember hearing some 'off color' jokes growing up, there just didn't seem to be the same barriers, racially or financially, amongst us military brats. We simply enjoyed playing together, and going to school together. Back then, we couldn't wait to get home, then go back outside and play. Whether we rode bikes or went exploring, we enjoyed every moment we could. Sure, some days you would come home and watch Gilligan's Island or something like that. But even then, we only had three or four television stations to choose from, so your time watching tv was limited!

My parents didn't always make us say, "Yes sir" or "No Ma'am", but we might have received a swat on the back of our head if we spoke to another adult without saying "Yes, please" or "No, thank you". Respect for our elders and for any authority figure was extremely important. You never called a grown-up by their first name. They were addressed as Mr. or Mrs., and then their last name. It wasn't until I moved to the South where I learned it was acceptable to call an adult family friend by their first name, only you have to include the Mr. or Ms. before the name! Somehow though, you always addressed your teachers by using their last name. There were a lot more male teachers back then too.

I now have three, nearly grown children. My oldest, my only daughter, is now a mother of a two year old boy, and one on the way. We've learned recently that he will be a boy as well. At a time when I should be elated and jumping for joy, I find myself in constant prayer. My daughter is not married, and she has very little means for supporting herself and her two sons. I love my grandson with every fiber in me, and I will love his brother too. Being a grandmother brings me a type of joy I never could have imagined as a mother. But I am grieving over her situation. This wasn't the picture I had placed in my mind, for her and her future.

Our children were brought up in what I believed to be a good and solid Christian home. All three have been in church since they were in my womb, and I am happy to say that by the grace of God, all three have their original parents, still married now for twenty-three years. We

brought them up knowing right from wrong, showing respect for their elders, and always trying to do their best with whatever they attempted to accomplish, so they wouldn't have any regrets, no matter the outcome. I fear that the fatherless, child-mother family is becoming a common dilemma for this next generation...also known as the 'Me' generation.

Today, I see babies raising babies at an alarming rate. I was in my late twenties when I had my daughter, and feared I wouldn't be able to handle the responsibility of nurturing another human being. How can these 'girls' possibly think they can raise little ones when they are barely able to cope with life for themselves? I see children being toted around in one hand, while their young mothers are texting on their phones with the other. I have seen little ones running absolutely wild in the store and the two people who I 'assume' are the parents are looking in the other direction or laughing at how 'cute' their little monster is. These children who are being raised by children are not being taught to speak respectfully to others, and are even using language that would make a soldier blush.

Having worked for the school system in the human resources department, I was introduced to the teachers applying for jobs, fresh out of college. I also saw many who I had wondered how they were allowed to be in a classroom with children in the first place. The instilled rules I was given as a child for showing respect to teachers was tested many times, but I do believe the majority of teachers out there really want to teach and share their knowledge with our children. It is so unfortunate that now, due to the lack of parenting at home, teachers are also expected to teach manners and even personal cleanliness to these children. Having some friends who are currently teachers, I see their frustration and disillusionment with the idea of teaching. There are so many regulations and standards required, and now they have to take on the parent's role as well.

The parents of children today have changed so much from when I was a child. Again, a trip to visit school was cause to dress a little nicer than usual, but now parents show up in their pajamas, tattoos up and down both arms, and piercings in their noses and eyebrows. How can these 'children' show their children how to respect others when they don't seem to respect themselves? And I don't even know if it is necessary to talk about video games. These baby-parents are spending ions of time and money playing these games, as their little ones who are desperate for attention and direction, watch them diligently, taking their mental notes. At times I find myself extremely concerned about the people who are to be our future lawmakers, business men and women, and even more frightening, our politicians.

As with all things, I know our God has this. He knows what is happening, He knew it would happen, and knows what the outcome will be. I doubt that He is very pleased with things as they are, but He knows the end of the story, and this is where I find my comfort. I'm sure in the 1960's when families were building bomb shelters and stocking up supplies in the event of a Soviet Union missile strike, there were parents and grandparents like me who were wondering what was to become of us, and the future generations.

Times have been changing, and yet, our dreams and hopes for the future are very much the same. Although our worries may differ, the big picture of what we're worried about is virtually the same; "What will the future hold for the generations to follow?" There is however, one major

difference between then and now. I truly believe we are living in the 'end times' the Bible speaks of in the book of Revelation.